



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Montgomery County
Borough of Bridgeport
63 West Fourth Street
Bridgeport, Pennsylvania 19405

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R-2022-5031672

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Post Office Box 3265
Keystone Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter today to urge you to reject Pennsylvania American Water's request to increase residential water consumption rates by \$15 per month. I represent the Borough of Bridgeport as the Mayor, and as part of a body of residents that is fiscally responsible for keeping our Borough running, I understand that prices for everyone are rising. That this utility company would require a rate increase for residents is not a surprise; however, a sudden increase of fifteen dollars per month would adversely affect many of our residents. Those on fixed incomes or those who are experiencing poverty would be particularly hard hit.

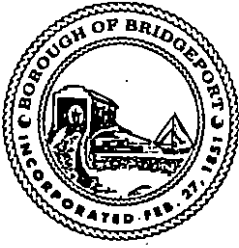
The rate request states that, if approved, residential customers using 3,212 gallons or more per month would have their bill increased from \$60.49 to \$75.49 per month. The EPA notes that the average American uses 82 gallons of water per day¹, or 2,460 gallons per month. According to the 2020 Census, there are 2.38 residents per Bridgeport Borough household², so the average household in our community will find itself affected by this increase.

The Census Bureau also shares that 21% of Bridgeport households currently find themselves experiencing poverty, which the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines define for a household of four as earning a collective \$27,750 per year³. If this particular family, who is spending an average of \$726 per year on their water bill, now must pay \$906 per year, that is a 24.79% increase that they simply cannot afford. This family's \$906 annual water bill will end up encumbering 3.26% of their entire year's income. Many households in our community are still recovering from pandemic-driven income losses, rebuilding after Hurricane Ida destruction, and are now finding their budgets greatly affected by spiking costs of groceries

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/statistics-and-facts>

² <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>

³ <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>



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and fuel. I am concerned that families who are already in these tenuous situations, through no fault of their own, may be pushed past a financial breaking point.

Pennsylvania American Water's proposed rate increase of 24.79%, nominally designated for infrastructure upgrades, is almost triple the current rate of inflation. I question why these projects could not be undertaken in a measured manner that would allow for costs to be more evenly distributed with rate increases moderated and prepared for by residents. I believe this audacious request to be severely out of touch with realities in our community. Pennsylvania American Water has enjoyed the benefit of a monopoly over Bridgeport's water supply for many years, and I understand that our residents have benefitted from the service, but the water company's ask here is simply too great.

I thank you for your consideration in ultimately rejecting this rate increase.

Sincerely,



Beth Jacksier, Bridgeport Mayor

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BOROUGH OF BRIDGEPORT

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4th and Mill Streets
P.O. Box 148
Bridgeport, Pennsylvania 19405

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